

like some fluorescent deep-water fish by comparison! I once went down to check for butterflies during daytime. The bottom of the pool – which I had thought was smooth stone – turned out to be some sort of tar. I remember thinking that the Germans could hardly have done that. But the niggling thought remains – might I actually have missed triggering the Nigerian oil-boom?

My mother had been advised of the travel problems. Our re-union was still as full of emotion as it was on dozens of later occasions when she was sure I would not have survived some relatively pedestrian enterprise. But after ten days in the bush, there is nothing wrong with a bit of pampering.

I was reminded of these events since I just finished something I always wanted to do. I have named a butterfly *Bebearia omo*. The forest has shrunk in size ever since 1967 and only a small core area still remains intact, though it has long had the status of a National Park. A series of this fine butterfly was collected by Robert Warren, who cares so much for the forest, that he immediately agreed to call it *omo* rather than *warreni*, in the hope that this will help the survival of what remains of this wonderful forest (Robert contributed the photo of the forest as it is to-day).—TORBEN B. LARSEN, UNDP Vietnam, c/o Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland (E-mail: torbenlarsen@netnam.vn).

PS. I need hardly say that my American friend's project came to grief – the fact that Omo was overrun by Biafran forces a month later when the civil war started being only a minor contribution. I do not know what happened to the toilet bowl. I still have the butterflies from the trip, half a dozen of which I never saw again in nature.

A few moths (Lepidoptera) of note from Monks Wood National Nature Reserve, Huntingdonshire (VC 31)

A Rothamsted Insect Survey light-trap has been operating at Monks Wood for over 30 years, providing a very large and invaluable long-term data set. The trap is known as Ewingswode (site No. 277, O.S. grid reference TL 200797) to distinguish it from a trap previously run in the area round the laboratory buildings at CEH Monks Wood; and is annually one of our most productive sites, with a very high diversity of species. Despite its long run, the trap does still occasionally catch specimens that are particularly interesting.

On the night of 8/9 July 2003, the county's first Blomer's Rivulet *Discoloxia blomeri* Curt. (Geometridae) was recorded. This is a nationally scarce species, but as yet there is no sign of it breeding in the area.

A Great Prominent *Peridea anceps* Goeze. (Notodontidae) came to the trap at some point during the period 31 May – 5 June 2003. This was the first record of this species in Monks Wood since 1918, made all the more unusual by the fact that this oak feeder does not occur more frequently in the oak-dominated woodland.

A singleton of the Dotted Fan-foot *Macrochilo cribrumalis* Hb. (Noctuidae) was caught on the night of 6/7 July 2003. This is another nationally scarce species and

was a first for Monks Wood. Mostly confined to East Anglia and Essex, this specimen is more likely to have come from the large population at nearby Woodwalton Fen NNR than from any new breeding site.

Five specimens of the Pale Pinion *Lithophane hepatica* (Noctuidae) were trapped during the period 19 September – 2 October 2003. Not recorded at the site before, this sparsely distributed but locally common species appears to be extending its range. It should certainly be looked out for away from its southern and western strongholds.

My thanks to Nick Greatorex-Davies for alerting me to these interesting discoveries, supplying me with useful background information, and for running the trap so well in the first place.— PHILIP J L GOULD, Co-ordinator, Light-trap Network, Rothamsted Insect Survey, Plant & Invertebrate Ecology Division, Rothamsted Research, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 2JQ (E-mail: phil.gould@bbsrc.ac.uk).

***Acronicta rumicis* L. (Lep.: Noctuidae) extreme melanic ab. *lugubris* Schultz in Kent, and continued decline in melanism**

The aberration *lugubris* Schultz of *Acronicta rumicis* is black with almost complete obliteration of the lighter markings retained by ab. *salicis* Curtis. Kettlewell (1973. *The Evolution of Melanism*) regards it as an industrial melanic, common in the Barnsley area of West Yorkshire, and a short series from there is in the National (RCK) Collection in the British Museum (Natural History). The aberration retains the white tornal spot on the forewings and it is very conspicuous, but the line of subterminal dots is almost absent.

On 15 August 2003, a specimen was noted at my garden mv light at Dartford; I can find no reference to other specimens being observed in either Kent or the London area. It is interesting that this specimen should be noted at a time when melanism in the species has reached a very low level.

Year	% typical	% melanic	Sample size
1995 – 1999	92.1	7.9	82
2000	93.3	3.7	53
2001	96.0	4.0	71
2002	97.2	2.8	71
2003	96.2	3.8	104
2004	100.0	0	72

Acronicta rumicis (L.): Percentage of typical form and ab. *salicis* Curtis at garden mv trap in Dartford, 2000 - 2004